

REMARKS

This amendment responds to the Office Action dated July 13, 2004.

The Examiner objected to Applicant's Abstract of the Disclosure because it contains less than 50 words. The Abstract has been amended to include 50 words.

The Examiner objected to FIG. 1 of the drawings, requiring that it be labeled as "prior art." Enclosed with this office action is a corrected FIG. 1, which makes the required change.

The Examiner objected to claim 1, contending that the term "the same potential" lacked antecedent basis. Claim 1 has been amended to eliminate this term.

The Examiner objected to claim 9, contending that the term "said first probe" lacked antecedent basis. The Examiner also asserted that the claim was unclear as to how to measure the "distance" recited in claim 9. Claim 9 has been amended to provide antecedent basis for the term "said first probe" and to recite the limitation of "wherein said first probe is electrically interconnected to test instrumentation using a conductive element having a length, at least 50% of said length comprising a twisted pair of wires." This latter limitation, as amended, addresses the Examiner's concern regarding the claim's clarity.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 6, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Admitted Prior Art (APA) described in Applicant's "Background of the Invention" section of the specification. The Examiner contends that the APA shows all elements of independent claim 1, including that of a second conductive member spaced apart from said chuck . . . wherein said first conductive member is electrically interconnected to said second conductive member." With respect to this recited limitation, the Examiner is incorrect. FIG. 1, along with Applicant's APA, discloses a prior art probe station having a multi-stage chuck where the top layer of the chuck (a "first conductive member" as recited in claim 1) supports an electrical device, the middle layer of the chuck is connected to a guard signal and the lower layer of the chuck is connected to a shield signal. To provide additional guarding, the middle layer of the chuck is electrically connected to a guard "skirt" that extends upwardly around, but does not

contact, the top layer of the chuck. Also to provide additional guarding, a suspended guard member (a second conductive member" as recited in claim 1) is positioned over the chuck. Contrary to the Examiner's suggestion, though the cable 22 is connected to the suspended guard member (the second conductive member), the cable 22 is not connected to the top layer of the chuck (i.e., the "first conductive member" of claim 1). Instead, the cable 22 is electrically connected to the guard skirt and hence the middle layer of the chuck. Thus Applicant's APA does not disclose the limitation of "wherein said first conductive member is electrically interconnected to said second conductive member."

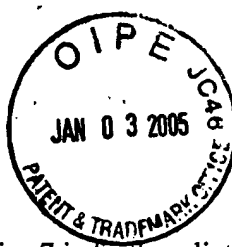
For clarity, claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitations of "(a) a chuck having a first conductive member with a surface suitable for supporting an electrical device; and (b) a second conductive member spaced apart from said chuck, wherein said surface is capable of supporting said electrical device at a location spaced between said first conductive member and said second conductive member, wherein said surface is electrically interconnected to said second conductive member." This amendment removes any possibility of interpreting the "first conductive member" of claim 1 to read upon the middle layer of the chuck shown in FIG. 1 of Applicant's disclosure.

For the reasons stated in the foregoing paragraphs, independent claim 1 is distinguished over Applicant's APA and the Examiner's rejection of independent claim 1, along with its dependent claims 2, 6, and 8 should be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claims 3-5 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Applicant's APA (discussed previously) and Yassine, U.S. Patent No. 5,835,997. The Examiner's rejection relies upon the previously discussed misinterpretation of Applicant's APA. Claims 3-5 and 10 are further distinguished over the cited combination by the amendments to independent claim 1, from which claims 3-5 and 10 depend. For that reason, the Examiner's rejection of claims 3-5, and 10 should be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Applicant's APA (discussed previously) and Navratil, et al., U.S. Patent App. No. 2003014861. The Examiner's rejection relies upon the previously discussed

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misinterpretation of Applicant's APA. Claim 7 is further distinguished over the cited combination by the amendments to independent claim 1, from which claim 7 depends. For that reason, the Examiner's rejection of claim 7 should be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of Applicant's APA (discussed previously) and Streib, et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,031,383. The Examiner's rejection relies upon the previously discussed misinterpretation of Applicant's APA. Claim 9 is further distinguished over the cited combination by the amendments to independent claim 1, from which claim 9 depends. For that reason, the Examiner's rejection of claim 9 should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-10 of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

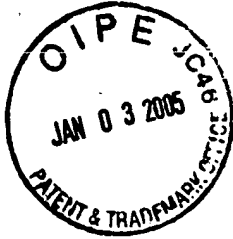
Dated: December 30, 2004

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APPENDIX

Attached is a corrected FIG. 1 to be substituted into the present application.



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Amendments to the Drawings:

Please substitute the enclosed corrected FIG. 1 for the original FIG. 1